DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 458 JC 020 742

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TITLE	There's More Than One Way To Skin a Cat: How Community College Presidents Frame Change.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	42p.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Change Strategies; Cognitive Processes; *College Presidents; *Community Colleges; Educational Change; Leadership Styles; *Organizational Change; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Central Michigan University; *Framing (Communication Behavior)

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a study that analyzed the ways in which community college presidents define and disseminate information on institutional and organizational change. It identifies three courses of change on community college campuses: presidential initiatives, internal pressures, and external pressures. The study centered on the presidents' framing of change--the choice of one set of meanings over another. Leaders frame (or bracket) change with particular issues or change initiatives on which campus members' can focus. The study qualitatively collected data from 28 senior administrators at two colleges in a multiple case study approach. Findings included: (1) two types of framing emerged: visionary framing, tying everyday campus activities to a longer-term vision for the campus, and operational framing, which focuses on the achievement of short-term goals through prescribed procedures; (2) the leaders' framing perspective drives the selection of goals for the campus and the strategies to reach those objectives; and (3) leader cognition influences the ultimate framing of the leader-the way leaders perceived the vision and future direction of the campus was reflected in their presentations to campus members. The study concluded that one form of dissemination is not more important than another, and that keeping a consistent presidential frame reinforces goals and aides in campus clarity. (Contains 19 references.) (ND)

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There's More Than One Way to Skin a Cat:

How Community College Presidents Frame Change

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College presidents lead their campuses in a number of different ways. One facet of their leadership involves helping campus members make sense of organizational change. Sensemaking for institutional staff contributes to their understanding of particular events and activities on campus (Morgan, 1997). This research focused on how community college presidents framed issues and events of change on campus and by what means they disseminated information to campus members. Framing involves the choice of one set of meaning(s) over another by the president (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Metaphorically, one can imagine framing by leaders as college presidents taking an empty picture frame that they then use to bracket particular issues or change initiatives for campus members' focus.

The sources of organizational change on campuses include presidential initiatives, internal pressures, and external pressures (Astin & Astin, 2000). For this research, the importance of the actual change initiative provided only a focal point of observation for studying presidential framing. My interest was not in the change per se, rather in how the college president focused the attention of the campus on particular issues. Prior to framing for campus members college presidents first consider what they themselves think about the issue. The presidents' understanding of the change and their own personal meaning making impacts the way in which they help others make meaning of situations (Amey, 1992; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996).

Leader cognition, therefore, plays a critical role in framing. How and what the college president thinks directly impacts how she or he, in turn, frames the change for others. First, cognition provides understanding for the leader, then framing by the leader offers campus members a means for sensemaking. Follower cognition, in turn, provides a feedback loop for the college president. Feedback from campus members influences subsequent choices the president makes for transmission of information. If a mismatch occurs between how a leader chooses to alert staff about change and the preferable way in which staff wish to discover new initiatives, the

feedback loop allows leaders an opportunity to adjust the manner of communicating to others the leader's particular framing message.

Previous research in institutions of higher education regarding change and the role of leadership and meaning making for campus members (Kezar & Eckel, 2001; Neumann, 1995b) confirmed that framing by the leader influenced sensemaking by campus members. What remains unknown from these previous research findings, however, is how leaders actually frame change and the accompanying mechanisms for information dissemination.

This research study sought to fill these gaps by studying community college presidents at two sites to answer the following research questions: How does a community college president frame organizational change and disseminate information about organizational change? What is the role of leader cognition in framing?

Data Collection

Inductive research strategies provided the best lens for this research to unearth the nuances of how college presidents frame organizational change. The descriptive nature of qualitative research with its use of "thick description" (Denzin, 1989) afforded a means of enhancing readers' understanding of the college presidents under study. A multiple case study provided the boundaries of the research, constricting inquiry to presidents of two two-year colleges of technology. Limiting the study to two sites allowed for a more in-depth investigation into the significant factors contributing to framing by the college president. The use of two sites permitted for greater variation across sites and enhanced sources for evaluation, as compared to just using one site (Merriam, 1998).

The chosen sites were two colleges of technology in a state with a central postsecondary governing board. These two institutions were part of a larger study previously conducted regarding a multi-campus strategic alliance (Eddy, 1999). The two particular colleges were chosen

because each had recently hired college presidents from outside the state's postsecondary system and the campuses they led had undergone organizational change, partially as a result of the alliance. The pseudonyms selected for the colleges in this study were Middle State College and Down State College. President John Grillo led Middle State and Suzanne Plane was the president of Down State.

Semi-structured interviews occurred with the college presidents, members of their senior cabinet, and faculty members. Some of the faculty members served as department chairs as well. Artifacts collected included copies of planning documents, regional accreditation self-study reports, campus newsletters, text from public speeches, and marketing pieces. On campus interviews totaled 28, with 15 participants at Down State and 13 at Middle State. Pilot interviews helped refine the interview protocol.

Transcriptions of the interviews were verbatim, providing the basis for coding of themes. An initial coding scheme evolved through subsequent refinement using a comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1998). Discussion of findings with a peer reviewer aided category construction.

Theoretical Framework

The primary analytic framework for this study was Morgan's (1997) organizational lens of culture. According to Morgan, "in talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways" (p. 138). Hence, meaning making for leaders involves the creation of reality for institutional members in a way that staff can make sense of the changes around them. To unravel the development of a shared reality in an organization, Morgan (1997) posited three central questions: "What are the shared frames of reference that make organization possible? Where do they come from? How are they created, communicated, and

sustained?" (p. 141) The social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) involves the enactment (Weick, 1995) of everyday activities. Investigating how campus constituents made sense of what their president outlined as important provided a source of verification of the effectiveness of the message the president was using to frame change and provided a means to determine preference for how campus members received information. How the president conveyed their framing perspective on campus occurred using a variety of communication tools. These tools include metaphor, jargon, stories, rituals, ceremonies, and myths. The dissemination of information may be communicated through formal means, e.g., speeches, newsletters, plans, and informal routes, e.g., symbolism, stories, etc.

Leaders attempt to sway opinions and alter individuals' mental maps (Senge, 1990) of understanding reality. Kelman (1961) highlighted how the role of leaders' persuasion of followers impacts organizational outcomes. The process of influence utilized by leaders results in compliance, identification, or internalization of change agendas by campus members (Kelman, 1961).

Weick (1995) pointed out that during periods of uncertainly sensemaking occurs after an event rather than during the time of change. The notion of the creation of reality retroactively affords the college president additional time to consider how to frame change. Acting as "sense-givers" (Thayer, 1988), leaders shape the ultimate interpretation of change by campus members (Smircich & Morgan, 1982).

College presidents exhibit a variety of leadership styles and ways of viewing the organization (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997). Current constructions of leadership (Green, 1997; Peterson, 1997) recognizes the intricacy of higher education organizations and the need for administrative leaders to think complexly, to draw

upon an array of leadership tools and paradigms, and to be reflective learners. Leader cognition takes on a larger role in these new paradigms (Neumann, 1995a).

Framing by the college president provides one tool for creating shared meaning for all campus members. Framing is the internalization of an initial understanding of the context of the college and its issues by the college president, resulting in the subsequent selection of a particular meaning, out of multiple options, being presented to the campus. The leader's cognitive orientation regarding campus events drives the selection of the means by which a president frames, the methods of preference in disseminating information to campus constituents, and what a president considers important when considering change options. Emerging from leaders' cognition are corresponding goals and strategies to accomplish change on campus. The selection of campus goals and mechanisms to obtain the identified change goals depends upon initial leader cognition. Determination of the precursors of framing provides college presidents with another leadership tool to aid campus sensemaking.

Case Descriptions

Middle State College and Down State College faced similar external environments. The campuses are part of a central state system in the northeast, which witnessed continual declines in state funding support over the past decade. The Morrill Act served as the impetus for the founding of both campuses approximately 100 years ago. Therefore, their roots were in providing agricultural and vocational education. The location of these institutions in rural locations aimed to target the state's farm population to educate students in the business of agriculture. Initially, the rural location of both institutions met the demands of students from the region. Today, while both colleges still draw students heavily from the immediate area, they also recruit nationally and have

a small contingent of international students since they have residence halls to accommodate out of area students.

The residential feature of the two sites created different demands than normally found at a two-year college. Aspects of student life and housing added another layer of management to the institution and allowed the colleges to increase recruiting efforts outside of their contiguous service area. Since both colleges are located in rural counties of the state without a community college, Middle State and Down State serve as the de facto community college for their counties. As such, they provide courses to area high school students and to a small number of returning adult students. The residential aspect of the colleges, however, made the student body composition more akin to residential four-year colleges with the majority of students between 18 and 22. Historically, the ages of most students concentrated in the younger range of 18 to 20, but the recent addition of baccalaureate degrees allowed some of the students to stay on at the colleges to complete a higher level degree versus transferring to another institution.

Findings

A number of important themes evolved from the data during consideration of the research questions driving this study. First, two forms of presidential framing emerged: Visionary Framing, for President Grillo and Operational Framing, for President Plane. Visionary Framing involved the president focusing the attention of the campus on the future, making the vision seem obtainable, and highlighted campus members working together to achieve the vision. Operational Framing focused the attention of the campus on the moment at hand, seeking to achieve solutions to campus issues via establishing processes for evaluation and for change, and laying a solid foundation for campus operations.

While it is tempting to place these two frames in a dualistic relationship that is not the intent of these findings. Rather, the two frames merely represent two framing perspectives found in the case of these two presidents. On both campuses informants discussed the good fit between the president and the campus and indicated that the person they selected was most appropriate to lead their college and to meet their current needs.

A second finding of this study related to the role of leader cognition in the creation of a framing perspective by a president. The role of past experience, presidential networking and resources, and the role of others all contributed to leader cognition. While all these elements influenced each president's thinking, they did so in different ways, ultimately impacting the framing perspective chosen by each president.

Finally, the presidents disseminated information on organizational change on their campuses using the same methods of delivery, but with different priorities and frequency between the forms. The meaning derived by campus members was dependent upon the framing by the president and the framing perspective of the leader dictated the predominant means of distribution of information on change. I identified four methods of dissemination, including: 1. Talking the Frame; 2. Walking the Frame; 3. Writing the Frame; and 4. Symbolizing the Frame. Framing by President Grillo and President Plane began during the process of interviewing for the presidency and continued after their arrival on campus.

Visionary Framing

President Grillo's visionary framing contained a number of specific components. First, his frame encouraged stretching the frontier of problem solving to include new solutions or alternative approaches to campus issues. For Middle State College this meant using the latest technological innovations and applying business perspectives to problems within the college. Second, a

visionary framing perspective meant Grillo attempted to connect the college's vision to the everyday lives of campus members. He did this often and in a variety of ways. For Grillo, visionary framing meant coming up with ideas by drawing parallels taken from other fields and applying them to Middle State College's programs. Third, instead of viewing challenges as threats to the college, he portrayed them to campus members as opportunities. Finally, he constantly strove to direct the attention of the staff to the long-term vision of the college and reinforced a forward focus for the campus.

Stretching New Frontiers

New approaches to academic program offerings, borrowing ideas from business and industry, and reconceptualizing student life on campus, were all part of stretching boundaries within a visionary frame. The first of Grillo's campus initiatives was the initiation of a laptop program. One faculty member noted how this initiative pushed boundaries for the campus.

> Laptop University was a big chance. It could have run through our auxiliary corporation and if it hadn't worked out they could have gone broke. Grillo's a gambler. But that was not the style of the previous president here over the last seven, eight, nine years....Grillo goes out and gets things done and it's working out.... Now if it doesn't that's when the college president gets in trouble! Right? (CG)

The latest discussion on campus to push new frontiers was a program for students involving electronics. Under the prospective plan each student would be issued a cell phone. Using the phone the students could access their dormitories, check e-mail, and the phone would serve as a general form of student identification on campus. Another proposed idea pushing the conception of the tri-fold vision for Middle State College involved the creation of business

incubators on campus to support both students and residents in promoting economic development for the region through entrepreneurial ventures. A new dairy facility served as a prototype for the marriage of business and education for the campus. Plans for the products of the dairy barn included marketing gourmet cheese and other products. Milk from the dairy operations was already used in the student dining halls.

Connecting Future Visions to the Present

Part of visionary framing involved connecting the vision and the goals for the college with everyday life for campus members. The vision for Middle State College involved a blend of high technology, business and entrepreneurial practices, and solid academics. President Grillo discussed how he used national recognition to help campus members to make connections between the vision and life on campus.

> You know we were ranked number one by Yahoo! Internet Live as the most wired campus. The first time that happened I think people were in a state of shock. Now we just got it again and that's something they never envisioned.... Being written up in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, being recognized as being very technical. They believe that now. They believe we are the most technical campus around.

Making the connections between the vision of becoming the premiere technical school in the region and the current accomplishments of the college in these efforts aided Grillo in moving campus members to see the college as a technical institution and not as a "cow college."

Grillo began connecting the role of technology to the future of Middle State during his presidential campus interview. Faculty began to see the connection between using technology and rewards. The registrar noted, "People who use the technology in their classes get the best classrooms. Others that traditionally had those classrooms are beginning to change and

incorporate technology into their curriculums so that they can access to the better classrooms. No one is forced to do it." (MW) Even though they were not required to use technology, faculty noted the link between using new innovations, a key aspect of the vision for the college, and access to better classrooms, a present day reality.

President Grillo used the strategic plan at Middle State College to help tie the overall goals and vision for the campus into specific tasks. The generation of the strategic plan occurred during campus wide meetings where staff discussed the future of the college. Grillo recounted, "We have to have solid academics or we don't even play in the ballgame. But the applied business emphasis and the entrepreneurial focus keeps showing up in different ways. As does the total integration of technology."

Opportunities and Successes—The Silver Lining

Visionary framing involved viewing the challenges facing the campus as chances for improvements. For example, the buildings at Middle State had deferred maintenance for a number of years and some, built in the 1960s during a period of expansion, were architecturally dated and beginning to show signs of age and neglect. President Grillo noted, "The campus had gone a long time without an investment in physical plant, which, from my perspective, represented an incredible opportunity, because then anything was perceived as great." As improvements were made and new buildings completed, he made use of occasions to highlight changes to the college infrastructure to campus members. To spotlight growth on campus he rotated the beginning of the semester campus wide meetings to different buildings. For the Fall 2001 meeting, he hosted the opening semester ceremonies in the newly constructed automotive building. Not only did this allow campus members to see the new facility, it reinforced the important role of vocational technology to the college's mission and showed forward momentum with growth of the campus's

physical plant. Campus members were excited about the building occurring on campus and pointed to the new construction projects with pride.

When discussing the faculty, Grillo noted that many are rather senior and beginning to retire, with more retirements expected within a five-year time frame. He said this "gave me opportunity to develop some perspectives there, develop some new, not only new programs, but new views within the traditional programs. To bring in some new blood if you will." Grillo described the campus faculty as being "ripe for change." He went on, "They [campus members] were ready. They were simply looking for someone to say, 'What should we do?' So, there was a receptiveness to any idea and a willingness to try things." The president provided direction to the campus via his visionary framing by highlighting opportunities and past successes.

President Grillo built his visionary framing by highlighting the successes of the campus. He reflected,

> …I used the power of the presidency to communicate those [visions and goals] and constantly refined them and amazingly even though a lot of people thought these [technology implementation, e.g., laptop computers, wireless, etc.] were nice things, they really didn't think they would happen. And it wasn't until some of these things started to happen that the bandwagon became crowded. Because then everybody said, 'Wow, he's not just talking about things.'

By framing situations as opportunities, Grillo guided campus members to see what could be done. Successes reinforced for campus members that Grillo's viewpoint of opportunity was accurate.

Forward Focus—Keep your eye on the ball

The president framed the attention of campus members towards the future, drawing the view of staff forward to new prospects on the horizon. The Vice President of Administration

highlighted the path the campus took since Grillo arrived. "I think we went from laptop to wireless and now his vision would be to do something with cell phones...." (JA) This illustration, which highlighted the technological aspect of the vision for Middle State, showcased the forward momentum for the campus. Comments from staff reinforced that they understood Grillo's forward focus. One faculty member pointed to possible ventures for the campus when she noted,

> I know there is talk of introducing cell phones...and certainly initiatives to join with businesses in joint college-business ventures. I know there's talk of trying to do training for people in other countries in the automotive area, to try to bring in some non-traditional types of students. Not even in the age type, but just nontraditional like that need specific training in specific areas. Something like an industry-school type of connection. (PE)

The focus on what was ahead provided a road map for the campus to follow. A long time faculty noted, "He's probably the closest to a visionary I've seen in many years." (CG) Providing a new vision of the campus as one heavily involved in technology aided in the creation of Grillo's new image for the college. The president strove to succeed in building a new image by focusing campus members' attention on future opportunities and goals to obtain the vision. A recent hire at the college told of her first encounter with the campus and Dr. Grillo.

> The reason I came to work here is because I'd met Dr. Grillo. I was doing an interview, I was a reporter and I interviewed him about his philosophy. I had heard that some really dynamic things were happening down in Middle State College, in the middle of nowhere. And I went down to interview him and a half hour interview, it ended up being an hour and a half discussion....I was very confident in

> Dr. Grillo, in his leadership and his leadership style and in the goals that he wanted to accomplish. (JD)

Behind the Scenes--The Idea Man

Part of the behind the scenes work for President Grillo entailed deciding what features to choose to draw campus attention. The philosophy at the heart of visionary framing centers on highlighting positive events for campus members and focusing on the future of change for the campus. President Grillo explained,

> Now part of the change that I didn't dwell on, at no point did I dwell on the negatives or even really talk about them much. The lack of funding, the sort of depressed state of the physical condition of the campus. I started working on the new stuff while I was dealing with the other stuff. I guess the message there was that I am trying to get them to take their eyes off the problem all of the time and look at where we're headed. 'Join me and this is where we're going.' And let that become the focus and it seems that a lot the concerns one has then become less important.

Focusing the attention of the campus on the future and achieving some of its goals allowed campus members to feel positive about change. The challenge remained, though, for Grillo to be able to successfully solve the problems that were inherent on the campus that may prevent the achievement of the vision.

Part of the behind the scenes work for President Grillo involved the generation of new ideas for the campus. According to informants, the optimistic attitude of the president rubbed off on campus members. Long time campus members pointed out that "people have more faith in the president," especially when compared to the previous president. While

the former president, President Thomas, was described as a "great guy, [he] had trouble making the hard decisions.... John [Grillo] doesn't have that problem. I think people respect that." (TD) Grillo's "straight shooter" traits engendered support from campus members. The president acknowledged that he had a tremendous amount of ideas, but noted a caveat. "The problem I've had everywhere I've been is, 'John, we have more ideas than we have money or time to deal with, so slow down.' And that's fair, a very fair concern."

Operational Framing

President Plane used what I labeled operational framing at Down State College. In general, operational framing differs from visionary framing in its approach to campus issues using a perspective that first assesses issues and then proceeds to build a set of discrete plans and ideas to elicit necessary changes. First, President Plane drew on her past experiences in enrollment management to apply traditional approaches to the campus's self-identified main problem of enrollment. She used tactics that previously worked for her to help focus the attention of campus members on ways to increase enrollment. Second, her approach was methods oriented. Plane worked to establish procedures and protocol to accomplish changes on campus. Third, the president approached new situations from a problem solving perspective. In her framing for the campus she first defined the latest campus issues, then aided staff in deconstructing the larger concern into smaller, controllable components with manageable steps to reach a solution. Finally, Plane paid attention to present day issues and their resolution to begin stabilizing the college and to build a foundation for future growth. President Plane, like President Grillo, also attempted to solve problems behind the scenes to help staff focus on other issues. A major difference, however, was that Plane did not report out the successes resulting from her unseen work.

Traditional Operations

A critical focus of the strategies employed by President Plane at Down State College involved increasing enrollment numbers. Her framing of means to accomplish this goal on campus was through traditional enrollment management strategies. During the presidential search process, the campus identified increasing student numbers as a priority since the formula for state funding was based on full-time equivalent students. Plane's position immediately before coming to Down State was as the Vice President of enrollment management at another community college. She also was a consultant for a national enrollment management firm. As such, Plane was well versed in tactics to increase enrollment. The Vice President of Administration noted the success of the campus using traditional strategies, "We became very aggressive in our recruiting. That's enabled us to grow significantly in our enrollment, which is key to a college like this or to any college in the state system because the funding formula is enrollment driven." (BH)

The president initiated a number of changes that led to growth in enrollment numbers. Enhanced marketing strategies, changes in the number of credit hours recommended for students during the semester, and the addition of new programming options—primarily new baccalaureate degrees, all worked to erase the prior declining trend. The implementation of new bachelor programs was enrollment driven, as pointed out by one dean. He noted, "I think that [new bachelor programs] were also driven by the desire of the college as a technology college to find a more secure market niche." (JN) Filling a niche reflected on a core campus question of determining the identity the college wished to have. Generally, programs targeted for new bachelor degrees built on areas of strength within the college.

One of the first organizational changes President Plane made was to reorganize the reporting structure below the cabinet. This process took her approximately a year and a half to accomplish. The college went from a chair structure to a dean structure, hiring all the new deans

from the existing faculty. Again, this highlighted a traditional form of operations by establishing a hierarchical reporting structure. Restructuring of operations allowed for structural adaptation of the existing bureaucratic form and for new divisions of work.

President Plane developed a Program of Work for the campus, which she announced at the end of her first semester as president. The program contained eight goals for the college. The plan formulated by the president addressed goals to increase enrollment, improve retention, and cut costs. The president dealt with these issues using traditional linear or long-range planning techniques, setting short-term goals and taking steps to achieve these goals. Planning was responsive versus strategic or proactive.

Methods Orientation

The methods orientation of President Plane's operational framing fit into the bureaucratic organizational structure of the state system. Her oversight of operations involved a reliance on procedures with associated accomplishment of tasks. One feature of the state system involved a hierarchy and chain of command, with many programming options dictated by the system's central office. President Plane opted to work on the relationship between Down State and the central system office to build a base of support. Plane was the first president installed by the new Chancellor of the state system and now serves in some leadership positions on state committees. She noted, "...I think our relationship with [the state central office] is very good and that's important to Down State. Very important. I have to spend time with the legislature, our congressman, Federal, and our senators." Cabinet members pointed out they felt the president was doing a good job in her role interacting with the central office.

The Program of Work outlined by President Plane contained eight overarching goals for the campus and under each of those there were some very specific tasks. The main thrust was increasing enrollment to solidify fiscal solvency for the campus. One of the programs established

to accomplish this evaluated academic programs through a formulized procedure to determine their viability. The Vice President of Academic Affairs oversaw this project and reported on the procedures,

> Well, what [President Plane] did is that October [1999] she asked all supervisors, function heads to answer 14 questions. She called it a comprehensive plan. Some of the questions were information that we knew already. But we wanted to see if our data matched with what they said. Some of them were open ended, 'What are your strengths?' 'What are your weaknesses?' 'How could you maximize enrollments if you are not already there?'....And those programs that were weak, which we called in jeopardy, I would notify the department chairs.

The Vice President went on to say that this was the first time in his 30 years on campus that a method of evaluation occurred. Other campus members spoke in support of the procedure and commented on Plane's "courage" to deactivate programs. The implementation of the review system by Plane employed a specific set of criteria in evaluating programs. Borderline programs were placed "in jeopardy" and received special assistance to help them turn around. If programs did not succeed with the additional help, they were eliminated.

Another step in the process to shore up enrollment numbers involved shifting credit hour loads for full time students. The president said, "I did a series of educating that one way to help ourselves was to make sure the students, I didn't want to overload students, that wasn't the goal, but we needed to be at maximum or closer to maximum for students to graduate on time." Two years into Plane's presidency, Down State moved from last among the five school of technology to second in credit hours taken by full-time students. This change meant an increase in funding for

the campus without increasing the number of students on campus. The president framed how to use the existing state bureaucratic system and an established process to benefit the college.

Problem Solving Campus Issues

President Plane approached troubles associated with tight resources at Down State College by individually highlighting problems and considering alternative solutions. Financial constraints permeated all discussions with the president and campus informants. When asked to recount her first impressions of the college, President Plane said,

> People put a good front on, they put a good face on, but it was clear that there was some underlying cynicism or just a concern about how this campus was going to be viable. I don't think anybody said that to me, but I just felt like people were, I don't want to say morale was low, but I think people had a lot of concerns on their plate. Financially the college had been hit over, and over and over. And I did not begin to understand the staggering financial challenges here.

One of the most frequent comments from campus members was, "We are constantly being asked to do more with less." The expectation was that the 2002 college budget would finally reward the hard work of the campus and their efforts in increasing enrollment. The events of September 11, 2001, however, dashed that hope. As one campus member noted:

> I think currently we're probably feeling a little victimized in that part of the carrot for enrollment growth is increased resources and the college for the last couple of years has been moving up with respect to its enrollment and expecting to reap the benefits and then New York City and we are victimized by the events of September 11th and all of a sudden, and obviously that was a pretty outrageous occurrence, but it was just another occurrence in terms of its fiscal impact on the institution. I think

> a lot of people feel that if it wasn't that, it would be something else. We never seem quite able to grasp the brass ring. You know, it's always appears to be within reach. So I think that people really struggle keeping a stiff upper lip and doing all the positive things we do on a daily basis and it continually seems to be one step forward and two steps back. (RC)

Plane attempted to frame the financial challenges as a series of problems to solve. The main tool in addressing financial issues was increasing enrollments. Program evaluations and credit hour requirements for students provided different solutions to the financial problem. New retention tracking software attempted to provide another solution.

Campus Focus In the Moment

One component of operational framing for President Plane involved getting campus members to attend to immediate issues. She sought to establish a solid financial foundation for the college upon which to build in the future. As noted, she concentrated resources and energy on enrollment numbers. A campus dean, however, highlighted the potential difficulty in constantly addressing issues from a short run perspective.

> Sometimes the fact that we don't have very much money means for me, that [conserving resources is] always the first solution that everybody goes to and we don't maybe problem solve in a way that we could. But the fact that we don't have any money pervades everything, every single thing. Sometimes we do things in a way that eventually is going to cost us more money. We're like the people who can't afford a car, so we take a cab. (jA)

Concentrating on the moment at hand precluded some future options. The ideal of operating in the moment, coupled with the campus' tendency to rely on historical processes presented some issues for the president as she related in this vignette,

> The construction students do for-profit projects. It's a way of generating money for their program. And they always charged 13% overhead. But they complained that they didn't have enough money to do some of the things that they wanted to do. So I said, 'Why do they charge 13%? Why isn't it 18% or 20%?' Well, nobody could answer that question. Somebody just said let's charge 13% out of the blue. And so, those are the kinds of things, those are the kinds of questions I asked. If we want to earn more money, why don't we charge more? Nobody ever asked those questions.

Plane's framing for the campus included asking questions of past practices, but the answers still focused on finances and short term solutions using traditional resolutions.

Behind the Scenes—Solving Problems

As with President Grillo, President Plane worked to solve some campus problems behind the scenes. When she arrived on campus she was faced with a number of financial challenges. As she outlined them,

> We had four big financial problems. The first had to do with our enrollment....Then the auxiliary was losing $300,000 a year. That is, let's see, food service, the bookstore....That was losing $300,000 a year and had been raided to support a lot of other things and the State actually put the campus on notice that they would dissolve the auxiliary if the problem was not resolved within a year....The third was that we wanted to build a residence hall because the students were complaining about the quality of the [dorms]...but we owed almost $500,000

> on a failed venture in town purchasing private apartments and the dormitory authority had bailed us out of that bad debt and would not allow us to consider building until the debt had been repaid. And the fourth thing was the foundation, which owns the golf course is losing money, had over awarded scholarships, they were spending more money than they were generating in revenue.... And three of those four problems are resolved!

While Plane was successful in managing the financial challenges she inherited by prioritizing attention and resources on them and vesting authority in her Vice President of administration, few campus members noted these successes, other than to comment on increased enrollment numbers. The financial officer for the college led the changes in the auxiliary corporation. In a two year time period the corporation went from a $300,000 annual loss to a $374,000 profit—an astounding turnaround for the campus. Campus informants did not, however, note this feat with pride or as an accomplishment of the new president. Indeed, one of the new deans and head of the campus self-study for accreditation stated, "[The turnaround in the auxiliary corporation] may not be so visible to some people on campus, but as close to the self-study that I was, that's something that I know about and it may be the case that not enough of the campus does know." (JN)

The lack of awareness of these recent financial successes extended to the planning process. Members of the campus often referred to the Program of Work outlined by President Plane after her first term on campus as "her" Program of Work versus "our" Program of Work. While Plane utilized coffee meetings with small groups of the entire campus and other campus wide meetings to discover staff concerns and to seek advice on the future direction for the campus, informants did not feel personal ownership over the planning process. One dean addressed the notion of inclusion:

> I certainly think you would find that dichotomy of opinion on the questions of planning for instance. I think some people think that it is going on and it's going on about as well as it can be expected given that it's hard to plan without having a budget. Others I think either sense there's an absence of planning or more likely believe that not enough people are included in the planning process. (JN)

Members of the campus self-study team preparing for accreditation appeared to have more information on operations of the campus that they discovered during the self-study process. The larger campus, however, did not share this general understanding of campus success due to the behind the scenes work of the president.

The president also spent considerable time working with the legislators from the region and the central office to gain favor for Down State College. One cabinet member noted, "Probably a lot of the people further removed from her have no clue how much time that takes." (BJ) Another time consuming effort was the reestablishment of the Alumni Association. The previous president dissolved the association and Plane was working to reinstate the area to build fund raising opportunities for the future.

Leader Cognition

Framing for the presidents was different since they each possessed a different cognitive orientation. In President Grillo's visionary framing he concentrated on the creation of global campus goals with associated detailed plans to obtain those goals. The focus of the president's frame was on the future and changing campus thinking in ways to stretch frontiers of possible actions at the campus. In addition, Grillo sought to connect current practices with future goals and viewed challenges as opportunities. Grillo thought about change more holistically and interpretively. I identified President Plane's Operational Framing, on the other hand, as more

routine oriented and concentrating on establishing campus procedures to allow for change at the college. The president focused on short-term goals and then outlined a corresponding set of specific recommendations to reach these goals. Traditional solutions to problems were applied, drawing the attention of the campus to the moment at hand. In operational framing, the campus did not view challenges as opportunities, rather as situations in which to apply problem solving techniques to seek resolutions. Therefore, the framing resulting from Plane's cognitive orientation reflected her tactical and incremental approach to problem solving. In both visionary framing and operational framing the college president worked behind the scenes to solve problems and to pave the way for change.

The role of leader cognition and the feedback of others was a critical component for President Grillo and President Plane in forming their ultimate frames. The findings of this study support earlier claims (Amey, 1992; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996) regarding the important role of leader cognition in the ultimate presentation by the president to campus members on interpretation of meaning. Elements aiding leader cognition included the presidents' past experiences, their networking contacts and resources, how they thought about change, and the influence of other campus members.

Grillo's cognitive processes relied on strategic thinking, taking consideration of contextual elements in an interpretative fashion. President Grillo pointed to a variety of materials he read that allowed him to draw connections between disparate topics and the vision for Middle State College. He expanded on the role written information played in his thinking:

> I read a lot of periodicals. And I try to draw parallels. This is *Wired* magazine [pulls a magazine out of a stack on the table] and this is a story of the surveillance society. Well, we have a program where we have some outstanding facial recognition software. And it's pretty slick. And I'm trying to find ways to integrate

> that program. We're working on a project where we have some animal identification systems that are non-intrusively integrated....Here's another magazine. We're working on this whole hydroponics area....Here's another article on [a university's] web page. We do a lot of the same things, but they've got one thing on here that's really slick that I've got to talk to our people about....Well, there are parallels in other areas that are very transferable. We're working with [a university] right now on a project that all they're doing with it is applying it to humans. We think we can apply it to the dairy industry. And if it works, it will be slicker than slick. And it's a parallel kind of thing. Taking things that apply over here and applying them to the academic world.

Plane's cognition, on the other hand, was more discrete and incremental. The initial element in framing involves the leader first understanding the situation at hand prior to explaining it to others. President Plane described her network of contacts as her greatest resource when reflecting on how she makes decisions. She relied on her inner leadership circle on the campus and the political connections she cultivated within the state's central office. These interpersonal connections added to her cognition. From them she learned about the best procedures to implement at Down State to help increase enrollment and how to make the most of the bureaucratic processes within the state's central system. When campus members reflected on how they thought Plane made decisions one dean noted,

> I think that she's very logical. I think she really weighs the pros and cons of the alternatives. I think she gathers a lot of information. I think she, I don't think she makes snap or quick judgments. I think she is rational, careful, thoughtful. (BJ)

Support of this idea came from other campus members as they commented that Plane took time to learn how the campus operated prior to instituting any change initiatives. Campus members noted that Plane was "well informed," "took time to know the campus," and "asked questions."

Dissemination of Framing Information

One of the intents of this study was to discover how college presidents disseminated information on organizational change to campus members and to determine the links between the routes of dissemination and the president's framing. Four mechanisms emerged for dispensing information regarding change on campus. These included: Walking the Frame, Talking the Frame, Writing the Frame, and Symbolizing the Frame. Both Grillo and Plane used forums and focus groups to talk about their planned change. They differed, though, on their approaches, with President Grillo preferring unscripted and open formats for his sessions and President Plane preferring scripted and topic focused sessions.

I included in the category of *Talking the Frame* formal speeches in open forums and casual conversations with the college president in small groups. In *Walking the Frame* the college presidents enacted their individual frames by taking their message out to campus members. Obviously in walking the frame, talking also occurred, but the greater point was where the president talked to campus members and the informal content of conservations. Yet another method for the president to bracket change for campus members involved *Writing the Frame.* In these instances the presidents used memos, meeting notes, web postings, or e-mails to spotlight particular events for campus members. A less tangible, yet important, means of getting information across to campus members was by *Symbolizing the Frame.* In this instance, the use of particular symbols, either literal or metaphorical, provided a lens through which the president framed change initiatives for campus members.

The leader's framing perspective dictated the prevalent use of one dissemination method over another. Grillo's visionary framing used more walking the frame and symbolizing the frame, whereas Plane's operational framing relied on talking the frame and writing the frame.

Discussion

Preliminary analysis of these research findings uncovered a dilemma. The original theoretical framework chosen to gird this study resulted in an unbalanced report of the findings. The cultural lens of meaning making (Morgan, 1997) favored the perspective of visionary framing since this frame relied more on symbolic functions. Operational framing, on the other hand, used symbolism the least and appeared as a "loser" during analysis. At this point, I, as the researcher, had a choice. I could continue to use the meaning making lens, with the subsequent results forming a deficit model, or I could step back and consider an alternative method of analysis for operational framing. Since my intent with this research was not to establish a dualistic relationship between the framing models discovered, I chose the latter approach and analyzed operational framing using a different theoretical lens.

For the analysis of operational framing I used a structural lens (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997). The basis of the structural frame is to achieve goals and objectives through standardization of operations. Goal specificity and formalization (Scott, 1998) enable the leader to look at the institutional system in a rational way in deciding what steps are necessary to achieve organizational goals. Formalization is the process that prescribes and regulates the actions necessary to achieve the goals and accomplishes this by making the steps explicit. Authority is obtained via a hierarchy, in which members have specific functional responsibilities. Work is divided to achieve results in the most efficient manner for the organization's context. "From this perspective, how the institution is organized and arranged influences the processes through which its goals are set, decisions are made, and work is completed" (Mintzberg, as cited in Eckel, 1998,

p. 16). Operational framing aligned more closely with a structural lens and allowed for a more comprehensive analysis in the case of President Plane.

Visionary Framing

Everyday practices within an institution highlight many traditions and social structures of an organization (Morgan, 1997). The examples provided by the informants of this study show an understanding of change by campus members via their descriptions of everyday campus practices. At Middle State College President Grillo used a number of different communication venues to constantly reiterate what he chose to frame for the future of the campus. Grillo's visionary framing persistently sought to focus the attention of the campus on a long-range view of being a premiere college of technology. Morgan (1997) outlined in his cultural lens "three related aspects of symbolic management: the use of imagery, the use of theater, and the use of gamesmanship" (p. 189). Grillo utilized all three of these features in his framing.

President Grillo consistently used imagery in the form of both printed documents and by verbally creating an image of the college. In print, Grillo showcased the mission of the college through a logo representing the connections between technology, academic programming, and an entrepreneurial focus. His verbal image of Middle State College as an institution with high levels of technology intertwined in the organization received constant attention during talks on the campus, in campus newsletters, and in face-to-face meetings with staff. Grillo's success in creating an image of the campus as high tech and business oriented was confirmed when two of his cabinet members separately recounted a vignette used by Grillo that described a Middle State graduate walking across the stage, receiving a diploma with a lap top in one hand and a business plan in the other. Grillo spoke of this same image when interviewed, using almost the same description verbatim.

Imagery was used in crafting promotional materials for the campus. Marketing pieces focused on the technical aspects of the college and referred to being named the most "wired two year campus" in the country. All informants boasted about this national distinction. The college's marketing plan used pictures of students with laptops in various locations around the campus and the school's web page reinforced the centrality of techno logy through pictures and text and the use of advanced web page functions like moving images and creative links.

Theater refers to the use of physical settings, appearances, and styles of behavior to convey meaning (Morgan, 1997). President Grillo made use of campus settings to support his message. One example of his using theater was the 2001 fall opening forum in the newly constructed automotive building. Not only did this showcase growth and forward momentum on campus since the building was new, it reinforced the importance of the vocational curriculum to the mission of the college. Having the meeting in this facility focused campus attention on the new buildings and showcased the incorporation of the technical aspects of the college with the long-term vision for the campus.

Gamesmanship, as defined by Morgan (1997), occurs when the leader views the organization "as a game to be played according to their own sets of unwritten rules" where the game player controls or influences the structure of power relations (p. 191). Grillo came to a campus wanting direction and strove to provide the answer for staff through technology. A significant decision early on in his presidency involved the Middle State College campus going the route of laptop computers despite the ongoing planning of a joint implementation program for laptop programs across all five state colleges of technology. Grillo's action highlighted for the campus his decisive decision making and that he was going to take the steps necessary to make Middle State successful using technology.

The symbolic breaking away from the joint effort allowed Grillo to capitalize on the distinction of being the first two-year school in the state with laptop programs. The decision to go to laptops was a risk for Grillo, but one he made based on his past experience implementing a similar program at his previous college. Campus members at Middle State held guarded responses until seeing the successes of the program. Being named "the most wired campus" by Yahoo! and witnessing the growth of programs using laptops in the curriculum sold campus members to Grillo's vision for the campus. The president's informal manner, beginning with his first campus meeting in which he opened with "You can call me John," to his populist style, allowed Grillo to fashion his game plan as one of highlighting the potential for the campus and guiding staff in an informal manner to achieve success. Part of Grillo's game plan was to connect the vision of the future of being the premiere college of technology to technology woven into everyday current campus life.

Neumann (1995b) proposed that "just as presidents may foster distress by neglecting their interpretive tasks, so may they foster hope by attending, through conversation, to what people know, believe, and feel about their college's financial condition and about the meaning and value of their collective work" (p. 24-25). While Neumann referred to meaning as it applied to resource issues, the same is true of organizational change in general. Grillo attended to meaning making at Middle State College to create a shared sense of vision about the future. He used elements of symbolism in imagery, theater and gamesmanship to frame a vision with long-term goals for the college. His visionary framing used dialogue with campus members to reinforce the creation of a reality for the campus based on the role of technology and business practices as central to operations. By highlighting successes for staff and managing meaning, Grillo stated, "They believe that now. They believe we are the most technical campus around."

Operational Framing

A structural perspective requires a level of predictability with routine procedures employed to reach goals. Considering organizations from this vantage point entails thinking of systems as rational where activities are purposefully performed and coordinated (Scott, 1998). Goal specificity and formulization make up rational systems. In goal specificity, goals are conceptions of desired ends. As such, they provide a set of criteria to consider when selecting among alternative means. Formalization establishes a set of rules that govern behavior within an organization. As a result of having a set of procedures for operations, the actual person performing the function matters less. The organizational hierarchy takes on increased importance in the structural perspective, with a division of labor separating specific task functions for staff.

At Down State College a goal was to increase enrollment. A number of alternates were selected to help achieve this goal including, changes in student credit hour load, the addition of bachelor degree programs, and providing resources for programs "in jeopardy." Given President Plane's background in enrollment management, she was able to consider a number of different ways through which to obtain the goal of higher student enrollments. The Program of Work Plane outlined for the campus contained other desirable goals. One of these was the conservation of resources. One way the college sought to meet this goal was through the implementation of on-line registration. Having the students register on line enabled savings in paper for hard copy scheduling and in human resources for meeting with students face-to-face.

Formalization of procedures was prevalent at Down State College. A component of the operational frame referred to the reliance of the college on procedures to meet goals. An example of this was the evaluation process put in place for all academic programs. Programs were evaluated based on a number of selected criteria, placing responses in a rubric that highlighted how many tangible and human capital resources a unit employed, and how many students were

enrolled in the program. Programs thought to be using resources ineffectively, or those programs with low enrollments, and hence lower money making potential for the college, were either eliminated or placed on notice to improve.

The establishment of a new dean structure also relied on a precise plan to appoint new deans to the open positions. Once Plane decided upon the new administrative set up, she outlined the steps required for consideration. These steps included a precise timetable for switching from the past chair structure to the new divisions. Included within the timetable was the process for hiring the new deans. Job descriptions outlined the new responsibilities for the position and stated the relationship of the dean to others within the organization.

Establishing a new dean structure at the college reinforced the notion of hierarchy at Down State College. Information was now collected at the dean level and disseminated through the organization via the deans. Faculty could likewise relay information up the organizational structure through their deans.

Since rationality resides in the organization itself versus individuals, meaning making is of little consequence. The dilemma of trying to discover the meaning making properties within operational framing is clearer when considering how this frame relies more on procedures and specific goals. Yet, campus members always attempt to make sense of events on campus. The meaning they take from an operational frame emanates from the rules and procedures. The structure itself provides meaning versus imagery or ceremony.

College Presidents' Organizational Lenses

Bensimon (1991) pointed out that given the complexity of higher education, a president using more than one organizational lens to view operations may "fulfill the many, and often conflicting, expectations of the presidential office more skillfully than the president who cannot differentiate among situational requirements" (p. 423). The four perspectives outlined in

Bensimon's research built on findings of Bolman and Deal (1997) and included bureaucratic, collegial, political and symbolic viewpoints. While Bolman and Deal referred to these organizational lenses as frames, I labeled them perspectives or lenses here to avoid confusion with the concept of framing by the president. Using this cognitive structure to analyze President Plane and President Grillo indicated that Plane used bureaucratic and political perspectives. Plane emphasized the establishment of procedures to make organizational decisions as seen in her implementation of program reviews and work on retention. Her mediation with on-campus groups vying for resources and interactions with the state's central office highlight the president's attention to the politics of the organization. Plane's negotiating between two campus factions of older and newer faculty provided an additional illustration of a political perspective.

President Grillo, on the other hand, used collegial and symbolic perspectives in outlining change. He worked hard to motivate campus members to participate in the laptop program and feel a part of the planning process. He created shared meaning at Middle State College regarding the future direction of the campus and the role of technology in that future. Also, operating within the symbolic perspective is Cohen and March's (1991) notion of "organized anarchies" where solutions are in search of problems (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977). In the case of President Grillo, he saw technology as a solution to a myriad of problems.

This study's findings highlighting the use of more than one organizational lens by President Grillo and President Plane refutes Bensimon's research assertion clustering community college leaders as using a single perspective. Both Plane and Grillo used more than one organizational lens. The difference in this finding may be attributed to the greater complexity community colleges face in the new millennium compared to when Bensimon wrote in 1991. Increased complexity requires the ability to view the assortment of campus issues from multiple perspectives. Differences may also be attributed to the fact that turnover in presidencies is

occurring more rapidly now than in the previous decade, bringing differently trained leaders to the presidency (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2001; McDade, 1991). Thus, while an individual may be a new president, they are not necessarily an inexperienced leader. Rather, new college presidents now also ascend to the presidency through alternative routes of business and industry or through different higher education areas other than academic affairs, e.g., continuing education, student services, etc. (Ross & Green, 2000).

Using Bolman and Deal's (1997) organizational perspectives raises the question of the connection between the leader's organizational perspectives and their framing. Clearly the cognitive perspective the leader brings to their presidency influences the way in which they ultimately frame. In this case President Plane's operational framing emanated from her bureaucratic and political perspectives of organizations. These cognitive perspectives rely on task orientations and working with competing organizational players. A strict utilization of a bureaucratic perspective is impossible for Plane since the environment in which Down State College operates is not static or closed from external influences. Here, then, is where Plane's additional political perspective intervenes. She balanced the competing powers of attention for resources, both on campus and with the state, to implement change. What is unknown is if a similar cognitive perspective always results in operational framing. Further research on framing is necessary to determine if this connection holds.

The visionary framing employed by Grillo built on his cognitive symbolic perspective of the organization and his collegial means to elicit campus support for change initiatives. Grillo managed meaning in a more conscious manner than Plane, using text and symbolic meetings to reinforce his change initiatives. "Presidents who use a collegial frame seek participative, democratic decision making and strive to meet people's needs and help them realize their aspirations" (Bensimon, 1991). Grillo utilized member feedback to adjust the vision and

operational plans for the campus, admitting that the final result was different than he envisioned on his own, but better as a result since it included an expanded campus vision. In describing President Grillo many informants commented on the fact that "he lets you do your job," conjuring up images of allowing staff to meet their individual potential, while at the same time realizing the vision for the institution.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicated that college presidents frame differently and, while success may happen via a number of framing routes, how the campus interprets the meaning of change was dependent upon how the president opted to frame it on campus. President Grillo used visionary framing, tying everyday campus activities to a longer-term vision for the campus and incorporating technology as a mechanism to achieve change. The operational framing of President Plane focused campus members' attention more on the achievement of short-term goals through prescribed procedures versus a longer range jointly created vision for Down State College.

If college presidents have an awareness of their preferred organizational lenses it would spotlight their leadership blind spots. Reflection allows presidents to think about the interpretation others may have of their actions or lack of actions and make adjustments accordingly if the results were not their intention. Knowing that meaning is taken from all forms of communication, college presidents need to carefully consider what messages they are sending when they talk, when they walk on campus, when they write to staff, and when they symbolize change. Being aware of the features of all these framing tools allows a college president an opportunity to actively construct the reality for the campus that corresponds with the vision and mission being purported. Campus leaders also need to employ a mixture of all the dissemination routes available since followers have different preferences in how they hear about information.

Leader cognition, with its associated components, expands the theory of framing. Rather than viewing cognition as static or simply an element to incorporate from a list, leader cognition is seen as dynamic and reacts to context and follower cognition. Acknowledging the role of the impact of follower cognition on leader cognition highlights the notion of the co-construction of framing.

In choosing leaders to run colleges, boards of trustees should be conscious of the role leader cognition plays for the college president in formulating a frame for the campus. Merely stating that they desire to accomplish organizational change does not indicate what the prospective president means by this. Thus, it is important to discover more of the candidate's underlying meaning schema for change to determine that it concurs with the desired direction the board has for the college. Understanding the candidates' preferred communication style could also indicate to the board the type of framing they may hope for from a new president. The ability to have multiple ways to view the organization and multiple ways to disseminate information to staff aids potential candidates in better understanding situations on the campus. For instance, if particular problems plague a campus, such as divisions among the faculty, a candidate possessing a political organizational lens would be most helpful for that campus.

The implication is that boards of trustees need a good understanding of the needs of their campus and should question candidates accordingly to make sure they obtain the best match. In preparing future leaders, mentors can emphasize the importance of a multiframe organizational perspective and also the importance of reflection so that the person has an understanding of the meaning they attach to change.

The findings of this research begin to address the "how" of sensemaking. While previous research (Weick, 1995) expounded on the role of identity construction for an individual in the process of sensemaking, it did not emphasize the critical component of cognition in leaders as they

frame and aid sensemaking for others. The direction that sensemaking takes on campus depends upon how the college president understands campus issues. Cognition for institutional leaders evolves from past life experiences, as well as the current context. As leaders frame for their campus members, follower cognition develops.

An increased understanding of the role of presidential framing on campus opens avenues for comprehending organization meaning making on both an institutional and an individual level. The discoveries in this study showcased that presidential framing began during the search process and continued after hiring. Generally, what a presidential candidate frames during an interview serves as an early reading for their presidency.

College presidents serve as directional navigators for campus members as they attempt to make sense out of events and uncertainty on campus. The findings from this research on two two-year college presidents reaffirmed the critical role of the language of the president and the communication of meaning to followers in understanding both the leadership of the presidency and the social construction of campus reality. The following summarizes discoveries of this research.

First, the leaders' framing perspective drives the selection of goals for the campus and strategies to reach those objectives. Framing for college staff creates opportunities of understanding and sensemaking of targeted initiatives. Second, the study confirmed that leader cognition influenced the ultimate framing of the leader. How the leaders thought about the vision and future direction of the campus was reflected in their presentation of information to campus members. Moreover, the meaning given to organizational change as an element of consideration in leader cognition impacted the president's framing. While it is increasingly normal for presidential interviewees to state that they are interested in organizational change, the meaning inherent in change differs from person to person. Antecedent leader cognition, therefore, goes beyond what

college presidents think about the future direction at the institution; it also includes the precise meaning associated with the leader's definition of change. President Plane's view of change was more incremental in nature and focused on providing solutions to campus problems, e.g., meeting enrollment targets. President Grillo's view, on the other hand, included a wider definition of organizational change, one that was more macro in nature, e.g., creating a premiere college of agriculture and technology. The way in which the college presidents viewed change ultimately influenced their framing of organizational change to campus members.

The leader's choice of visionary or operational framing within an organization depends on the context of the organization and issues it faces. In some cases a visionary frame may be the best match given the situation of the college, while in other cases, an operational frame obtains a better match. Timing with respect to an organization's life cycle may dictate the frame that operates best.

All four forms of dissemination identified in this study were important on campus since staff preferences for obtaining information differed. A critical finding of this research was that one form of dissemination was not more important than another, rather all four venues added to meaning making by campus members. Keeping a consistent presidential frame reinforced the president's goals and aided in campus sensemaking.

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